

Local government	\$34,480
Hospitals	30,900
Health and allied services, NEC	28,690
Individual and family services	28,040
Residential care	22,920

Median annual earnings of rehabilitation counselors in 2000 were \$24,450. The middle 50 percent earned between \$19,080 and \$33,000. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$15,790, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$42,790. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of rehabilitation counselors in 2000 were as follows:

State government	\$34,470
Hospitals	31,140
Individual and family services	23,650
Job training and related services	23,070
Residential care	20,360

Median annual earnings of marriage and family therapists in 2000 were \$34,660. The middle 50 percent earned between \$27,970 and \$44,320. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$22,770, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$44,320. Median annual earnings in 2000 were \$33,140 in individual and family social services, the industry employing their largest numbers.

Self-employed counselors who have well-established practices, as well as counselors employed in group practices, usually have the highest earnings, as do some counselors working for private firms, such as insurance companies and private rehabilitation companies.

Related Occupations

Counselors help people evaluate their interests, abilities, and disabilities, and deal with personal, social, academic, and career problems. Others who help people in similar ways include teachers, social and human service assistants, social workers, psychologists, physicians and surgeons, registered nurses, members of the clergy, occupational therapists, and human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists.

Sources of Additional Information

For general information about counseling, as well as information on specialties such as school, college, mental health, rehabilitation, multicultural, career, marriage and family, and gerontological counseling, contact:

► American Counseling Association, 5999 Stevenson Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304-3300. Internet: <http://www.counseling.org>

For information on accredited counseling and related training programs, contact:

► Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, American Counseling Association, 5999 Stevenson Ave., 4th floor, Alexandria, VA 22304. Internet: <http://www.counseling.org/cacrep>

For information on national certification requirements for counselors, contact:

► National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc., 3 Terrace Way, Suite D, Greensboro, NC 27403-3660. Internet: <http://www.nbcc.org>

For information on certification requirements for rehabilitation counselors and a list of accredited rehabilitation education programs, contact:

► Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 1835 Rohlwing Rd., Suite E, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008.

State departments of education can supply information on colleges and universities that offer guidance and counseling training that meets State certification and licensure requirements.

State employment service offices have information about job opportunities and entrance requirements for counselors.

Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists

(O*NET 21-1092.00)

Significant Points

- Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists work with criminal offenders, some of whom may be dangerous.
- A bachelor's degree in social work, criminal justice, or a related field usually is required.
- Good employment opportunities are expected.

Nature of the Work

Many people who are convicted of crimes are placed on probation instead of being sent to prison. During probation, offenders must stay out of trouble and meet various other requirements. Probation officers, who also may be referred to as community supervision officers in some States, supervise people who have been placed on probation. Parole officers perform many of the same duties that probation officers perform. However, parole officers supervise offenders who have been released from prison on parole to ensure that they comply with the conditions of their parole. In some States, the job of parole and probation officer is combined.

Probation and parole officers supervise offenders on probation or parole through personal contact with the offender and his or her family. Some offenders are required to wear an electronic device so that probation officers can monitor their activities. Officers may arrange for offenders to get substance abuse rehabilitation or job training. They also attend court hearings to update the court on the offender's compliance with the terms of his or her sentence and on the offender's efforts at rehabilitation.

Probation officers also spend much of their time working for the courts. They investigate the background of offenders brought before the court, write presentence reports, and make sentencing recommendations for each offender. Officers review sentencing recommendations with offenders and their families before submitting them to the court. Officers may be required to testify in court as to their findings and recommendations.

Probation officers usually work with either adults or juveniles exclusively. Only in small, usually rural jurisdictions do probation officers counsel both adults and juveniles. Occasionally, in the Federal courts system, probation officers may undertake the job of a pretrial services officer. Pretrial services officers conduct pretrial investigations and make bond recommendations for defendants.

Correctional treatment specialists work in correctional institutions (jails and prisons) or in parole or probation agencies. In jails and prisons, they evaluate the progress of inmates. They also work with inmates, probation officers, and other agencies to develop parole and release plans. Their case reports are provided to the appropriate parole board when their clients are eligible to be released. In addition, they plan educational and training programs to provide offenders with job skills, and counsel offenders either individually or in groups regarding their coping skills, anger management skills, and drug or sexual abuse. They usually write treatment plans and summaries for each client. Correctional treatment specialists working in parole and probation agencies perform many of the same duties as their counterparts who work in correctional institutions. Correctional treatment specialists may also be known as case managers or drug treatment specialists.

The number of cases a probation officer or correctional treatment specialist handles at one time depends on the counseling needs of offenders and the risks they pose. Higher-risk offenders and those who need a greater amount of counseling usually command more of the officer's time and resources. Caseload size also varies by jurisdiction of the agency. Consequently, officers may handle from 20 to more than 300 active cases at a time.

The nature of the work of many probation officers and correctional treatment specialists has been affected by recent changes in the parole and probation system brought about by public debate on the proper role of prisons, probation, and parole. This has resulted in more community involvement on the part of probation and parole officers in many jurisdictions. Instead of requiring offenders to meet officers in their offices, many officers are going into the community to meet the offenders in their homes and at their places of employment or therapy. Probation and parole agencies also are employing the assistance of community organizations, such as religious institutions, neighborhood groups, and local residents, to monitor the behavior of many offenders. The ability to do this additional fieldwork is facilitated by telecommuting methods, such as the use of computers, phones, and faxes. Probation officers also may telecommute from their own homes. Other technological advancements, such as electronic monitoring devices and drug screening, also have assisted probation officers and correctional treatment specialists in supervising and counseling offenders.

A debate also has emerged about privatizing the probation and parole systems. Many services, such as emotional counseling, job training, drug rehabilitation, and urine testing, already are contracted out to private firms. Some States, including Georgia and Tennessee, have already completely privatized some of their probation agencies. Another recent trend in corrections has involved abolishing parole, either altogether or for certain crimes. In some cases, States have placed many restrictions on the types of offenders who can be paroled and on how much of their sentence must be completed before being paroled. In States where parole has been abolished, another form of supervised release has been established.

Working Conditions

Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists work with criminal offenders, some of whom may be dangerous. In the course of supervising offenders, they usually interact with many other individuals, such as family members and friends of their clients, who



Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists usually meet with their clients either in their own office or in the field.

may be angry, upset, or difficult to work with. Workers may be assigned to fieldwork in high crime areas or in institutions where there is a risk of violence or communicable diseases. Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists are required to meet many deadlines, most of which are imposed by courts, which contributes to their heavy workloads. All of these factors contribute to a stressful work environment. Although the high stress levels can make these jobs very difficult at times, they also can be very rewarding. Many workers obtain personal satisfaction from counseling members of their community and helping them become productive citizens.

In addition, extensive travel and fieldwork may be required to meet with offenders who are on probation or parole. Workers may be required to carry a firearm or other weapon for protection. Workers generally work a 40-hour workweek, but some may work longer. They may be on call 24 hours a day to supervise and assist offenders at any time. They also may be required to collect and transport urine samples of offenders for drug testing.

Employment

About 84,000 people were employed as probation officers and correctional treatment specialists in 2000. Most of these workers work for State or local governments. The government level that employs these workers varies by State. In some States, the State government employs all probation officers and correctional treatment specialists, while in other States, local governments are the only employers. In still other States, both levels of government employ these workers. Currently, California and Texas have the highest probation and parole populations. Together these two States account for about one-fourth of the country's correctional supervision population. Jobs also are more plentiful in urban areas.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Background qualifications for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists vary by State, but a bachelor's degree in social work, criminal justice, or a related field from a 4-year college or university is usually required. Some States also require 1 year of work experience in a related field or 1 year of graduate study in criminal justice, social work, or psychology to become a probation officer. Some employers may require previous experience or a master's degree in criminal justice, social work, or psychology, of applicants wishing to become correctional treatment specialists.

Applicants usually are administered written, oral, psychological, and physical examinations. Most probation officers and some correctional treatment specialists are required to complete a training program sponsored by their State government or the Federal Government. A certification test also may be required in some States during or after the completion of training.

Prospective probation officers or correctional treatment specialists should be in good physical and emotional condition. Most agencies require applicants to be at least 21 years old and, for Federal employment, not older than 37. Those convicted of felonies may not be eligible for employment in this occupation. Familiarity with the use of computers often is required due to the increasing use of computer technology in probation and parole work. Candidates also should be knowledgeable about laws and regulations pertaining to corrections. Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists should possess strong writing skills due to the large numbers of reports they are required to prepare.

Most probation officers and correctional treatment specialists work as trainees for about 6 months. After successfully completing the training period, workers obtain a permanent position. A

typical agency has several levels of probation and parole officers and correctional treatment specialists, as well as supervisors. A graduate degree, such as a master's degree in criminal justice, social work, or psychology, may be helpful for advancement.

Job Outlook

This occupation is not attractive to some potential entrants due to relatively low earnings, heavy workloads, and high stress levels. Therefore, the number of entrants to the occupation may not be enough to fill all expected openings, resulting in good employment opportunities over the projection period.

Employment of probation officers and correctional treatment specialists is projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2010. Despite recent decreases in the crime rate, vigorous law enforcement is expected to result in a continuing increase in the prison population. Overcrowding in prisons also has increased the probation population, as judges and prosecutors search for alternate forms of punishments, such as electronic monitoring and day reporting centers. The number of offenders released on parole is expected to increase to create room for other offenders in prison. The increasing prison, parole, and probation populations should spur more demand for probation and parole officers and correctional treatment specialists.

In addition to openings due to growth, many openings will be created by replacement needs, especially openings due to the large number of these workers who are expected to retire over the projection period.

The job outlook depends on the amount of government funding that is allocated to corrections, and especially to probation systems. Although community supervision is far less expensive than keeping offenders in prison, a change in political trends toward more imprisonment and away from community supervision could result in reduced employment opportunities.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of probation officers and correctional treatment specialists in 2000 were \$38,150. The middle 50 percent earned between \$30,270 and \$49,030. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$25,010, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$59,010. In 2000, median annual earnings for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists employed in State government were \$36,980; those employed in local government earned \$40,820. Higher wages tend to be found in urban areas.

Related Occupations

Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists counsel criminal offenders as they re-enter society. Other occupations that involve similar responsibilities include social workers, social and human service assistants, and counselors.

Probation officers and correctional treatment also play a major role in maintaining public safety. Other occupations related to corrections and law enforcement include police and detectives, correctional officers, and firefighting occupations.

Sources of Additional Information

For information about criminal justice job opportunities in your area, contact your State's Department of Corrections, Criminal Justice, or Probation.

Further information about probation officers and correctional treatment specialists is available from:

► The American Probation and Parole Association, P.O. Box 11910, Lexington, KY 40578-1910. Internet: <http://www.appa-net.org>

Social and Human Service Assistants

(O*NET 21-1093.00)

Significant Points

- While a bachelor's degree usually is not required, employers increasingly seek individuals with relevant work experience or education beyond high school.
- Social and human service assistants are projected to be among the fastest growing occupations.
- Job opportunities should be excellent, particularly for applicants with appropriate postsecondary education, but pay is low.

Nature of the Work

Social and human service assistant is a generic term for people with various job titles, including human service worker, case management aide, social work assistant, community support worker, mental health aide, community outreach worker, life skill counselor, or gerontology aide. They usually work under the direction of professionals from a variety of fields, such as nursing, psychiatry, psychology, rehabilitative or physical therapy, or social work. The amount of responsibility and supervision they are given varies a great deal. Some have little direct supervision; others work under close direction.

Social and human service assistants provide direct and indirect client services. They assess clients' needs, establish their eligibility for benefits and services, and help clients obtain them. They examine financial documents such as rent receipts and tax returns to determine whether the client is eligible for Food Stamps, Medicaid, welfare, and other human service programs. They also arrange for transportation and escorts, if necessary, and provide emotional support. Social and human service assistants monitor and keep case records on clients and report progress to supervisors and case managers. They also may transport or accompany clients to group meal sites, adult daycare centers, or doctors' offices; telephone or visit clients' homes to make sure services are being received; or help resolve disagreements, such as those between tenants and landlords. They also may help some clients complete insurance or medical forms, as well as applications for financial assistance, and may assist others with daily living needs.

Social and human service assistants play a variety of roles in a community. They may organize and lead group activities, assist clients in need of counseling or crisis intervention, or administer a food bank or emergency fuel program. In halfway houses, group homes, and government-supported housing programs, they assist adults who need supervision with personal hygiene and daily living skills. They review clients' records, ensure that they take correct doses of medication, talk with family members, and confer with medical personnel and other caregivers to gain better insight into clients' backgrounds and needs. Social and human service assistants also provide emotional support and help clients become involved in their own well-being, in community recreation programs, and in other activities.

In psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation programs, and outpatient clinics, social and human service assistants work with professional care providers, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, to help clients master everyday living skills, to teach them how to communicate more effectively, and to get along better with others. They support the client's participation in a treatment plan, such as individual or group counseling or occupational therapy.